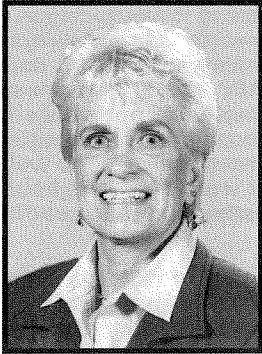


Hammerstrom's for the people in the 17th Senate District

Hotline



State Senator

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JANUARY IS CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH Recent studies have shown that cervical cancer may be one of the few cancers that is actually *preventable*. In an effort to help bring attention to this exciting news, the Michigan Senate passed a resolution last year recognizing January as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. Experts agree that the most effective way to prevent cervical cancer is for women to get screened regularly, with their physicians using the most up-to-date and appropriate techniques. A new DNA test that can detect human papillomavirus (HPV), the virus that causes cervical cancer, has been approved for women 30 and older by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. By offering the HPV test along with the Pap to all women 30 and older, we can better identify women most likely to develop the abnormal cell changes that lead to cervical cancer and thus, through early intervention, stop this deadly disease in its tracks.

DID YOU KNOW? Cervical cancer rates have decreased significantly over the last 60 years, due to widespread screening; and yet an estimated 4,100 women die in our country each year from this common malignancy.

NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCAMS Identity theft has become one of the most-committed crimes of the new millennium. With new technology and unlimited resources, criminals have become relentless in their search for vulnerable citizens to prey upon. There are a few simple guidelines you can follow to protect yourself or your loved ones from becoming victims of identity theft. For example, you should never give personal information such as social security numbers, bank account numbers, etc., to anyone over the Internet or telephone. Always be aware of unsolicited e-mails or phone calls asking for personal information. Keep in mind that banks and credit unions do not call or e-mail their customers to ask for updated information. In most cases, banks and credit unions require that you submit any updated information in writing. If you get an e-mail that warns you, with little or no notice, that your account will be closed unless you confirm billing information, do not reply or click on the link in the e-mail. Instead, contact the company cited in the e-mail using a telephone number or website address you know to be genuine. Always go over your bank or credit card statements closely. If you suspect fraudulent activity, contact your financial institution immediately. Finally, if you or someone you know has been the victim of identity theft, contact the police. The sooner you act to correct the situation, the less impact the crime will have on your credit report.

STATE POLICE WINTER TRAVEL ADVISORY WEBSITE AVAILABLE Whether your road trip involves visiting relatives in another part of the state or a quick drive to the local grocery store, you can check road conditions by visiting www.michigan.gov/roadconditions before leaving home. The Michigan State Police (MSP) website gives current road conditions for freeways and state trunk lines in any area of the state. These roadways are the first to be cleared during inclement winter weather. It is unusual for conditions on rural and county roads to be better than those listed in this advisory. While the MSP encourages drivers to use all available information when making winter travel plans, even the latest, most accurate information is not a substitute for good judgment. If weather conditions appear to be too severe to travel, they most likely are. Road conditions are categorized as clear, wet, icy, snow covered, slushy, overpass icy, drifting snow, lanes reduced, blowing snow or roads closed. The website is updated twice a day from information provided by law enforcement and public safety personnel working throughout the state. The advisory website is available from November to March each year. You can also access weather and road conditions by calling the MSP's toll-free travel hotline at 1-800-381-8477.

HELP PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT The Children's Trust Fund (CTF), created by Public Act 249 of 1982, is a nonprofit organization administered by the state Department of Human Services dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Its funds are generated solely by generous donations through income tax returns and are used to sponsor a variety of programs throughout the state. From 1983 through 2000, a checkoff on Michigan's income tax return allowed an individual to donate \$2 or more of his or her refund to the CTF. In 1999, 78,200 filers contributed \$938,300 (or \$12.00 per contribution on average) to the CTF. In 2004, the CTF funded 71 local child abuse and neglect prevention councils, funded 42 community-based direct service prevention programs, and administered 36 secondary prevention programs that collectively provided information and support to more than 444,000 Michigan children and families. Through legislation I sponsored in 2005, the CTF tax checkoff will be included on Michigan's income tax returns and you will once again have an opportunity to support this organization at tax time. To learn more about the CTF and its programs, please visit www.michigan.gov/dch, or contact my office, toll-free, at 1-888-477-8238.

If you would like to receive future issues of Hammerstrom's Hotline via e-mail, please contact me at SenBHammerstrom@senate.michigan.gov